C POLICY PAMPHLET NO. 13
RY D. GIDEONSE, EDITOR

EDUCATION VERSUS INDOCTRINATION

BY
HORACE M. KALLEN

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

To a student it may seem odd that the issue of indoctrination versus education should have arisen in contemporary America. It may well be that a certain form of inculcation is an essential function of the school. Perhaps social cohesion and the notion of a society itself cannot exist without some such process of "making" citizens.

When a group of representative scholars approve a statement on instruction in the social studies, however, in which they state that "national planning" is one of the objectives which the American nation seems to have set for itself *according to American history*, the time would seem to have come for some searching of the soul.

Is there not peril—to society and to scholarship—in linking the university to the drafting of such a civic program? Is it not preferable to leave the schools as free of *conscious* inculcation of purpose and of values as it is socially possible to make them? Does not society have enough other agencies—such as the family, the church, the press, and the political party—to participate in the process of *conscious* indoctrination? These are some of the questions with which Dr. Horace M. Kallen, Professor of Philosophy and Psychology, the New School for Social Research, is concerned in this essay.

This is the fourteenth of a series of Public Policy Pamphlets which the University of Chicago Press is publishing. Frequently the scholarly journals give no attention at all to problems that have an acute public interest, while the ordinary magazines can print little but superficial comment. The University might well perform a valuable service by making available to the public whatever special training and information it may have at its disposal. The continuation of such a series will, of course, depend upon its reception by the public.

Perhaps it goes without saying that the authors of these pamphlets are individually responsible for their views and that they in no way involve the responsibility of the University of Chicago.

HARRY D. GIDEONSE

September 20, 1934

EDUCATION VERSUS INDOCTRINATION IN THE SCHOOLS

I. SALVATION BY INDOCTRINATION AND SALVATION BY THE SENSE OF HISTORY

We Americans are inclined to take things hard. Our nerves seem to be rawer than other peoples' and our memories shorter. Perhaps we are deficient in that saving sense of history without which even the sense of humor cannot save. We deal in absolutes only. Each present moment of the national life is treated as if it were the sole moment; as if, singular and eternal, it were the alpha and omega of existence, without past, without future, without alternatives—age cannot wither it, nor nature stale its infinite monotony.

How very hard it was, in the late months of 1933, to bring to mind the high heart and exaltation of the years between 1923 and 1929, when all the princes and prophets of our democracy, from the White House to the White Front Emporium and Drug Store, were demonstrating that Prosperity was immortal, and that the Ides of Incomes could never, never come. When the immortal died and the impossible happened, when Old Man Depression made himself at home in the national economy, the national faith was stronger than death, and the White House itself emulated the Connecticut Yankee who solemnly declared, after staring a camel in the face for a week of days and nights, "I swan, there ain't no such animile."

A little later, it was told that Prosperity had only gone around the corner for a drink and would be right back with two chickens for every pot and two cars for every garage. But alas, the prophets were again false prophets. Old Man Depression made himself quite comfortable, as if settling down for a long, long visit, and fixed it so that there were two pots for every chicken and two garages for every car. Soon every trace of Prosperity was liquidated and its very memory blacked out.

Then Depression lived alone, supreme, filling every nook and cranny of the consciousness of the populace, the politi-

cians, and the publicists. Prosperity was as if it had never been. Never, we were told, was there so bad a time—never such unemployment, such misery, such suffering. Even our Fords and our Morgans have failed, and failed us. The very capitalist system has failed and fallen apart. We live in a chaos of competition, and its disorder and confusion spreads with the seconds. Now it was the utter breakdown of civilization which was just around the corner. Help! Help! Where, oh where, is the savior from the imminent doom?

Whenever was such a cry out of the depths permitted to go unheard? From every Ford and cranny of the land came voices answering. "Rugged individualism," "Change the tax system," the oracles announced. "Go off the gold standard." "Inflate." "Deflate." "Higher tariffs." "Free trade." "Debt revision." "Disarmament." "Five-hour day and five-day week." "Public works." "Fascism." "Socialism." "Communism." "Repeal the Eighteenth Amendment." "Planned Society." "Technocracy." "NIRA." "God." "Blue Eagle." And so on, in unmuted 'phony and antiphony, the chivalrous and inventive American spirit rose, to confront the national danger with multitudinous gospels of salvation that shall either perfect the old social order or build a new one, and by the one device or the other set up a new millennium, a new consummation of the "American dream" in which "the lot of the common man will be made easier and his life enriched and ennobled"—two chickens in every pot and two cars in every garage, and two pots for every woman and two garages for every man. Let but the American people cleave unto the right doctrine, let them but be true believers in the true faith, and all shall be well with them yet, forever and forever and forever.

Before such monitions of doom and gospels of salvation as these, the saving sense of humor is helpless without the even more saving sense of history. George Santayana once said that those who did not remember the past were condemned to repeat it; and perhaps we should gain in perspective what we lose in passion if the apostles of the schemes of salvation current could bear in mind that the decay of capitalist civilization was announced almost at its birth, that it was said to be

breaking down before it cut its first teeth, and that the news of its death has been greatly exaggerated ever since. Perhaps we should gain in patience and effectiveness what we lose in moral indignation if we recall how, in industrial countries, the common man has multiplied with his inventions, how his health has become better, his life longer, and his standard of living, as compared with those of the generations of his pre-industrial forebears, richer and more varied in material things, more varied and nobler in things of the spirit. Perhaps we should gain in wisdom what we lose in ardor if the apostles of the schemes of salvation current would keep alive in their remembrance the schemes of Carlyle and of Kingsley, of Ruskin and of Arnold, of Bentham and of Louis Blanc, of Fourier and of John Stuart Mill, of William Morris and of Karl Marx, of Peter Kropotkin and of Edward Bellamy.

Such a consciousness of the living past might, perhaps, mitigate a little the poignancy of the *crise plethorique* of 1929 with remembrance of the certainly not lesser poignancies of the crises of 1837, 1873, 1893, 1907—to mention only a few—when civilization was also on the verge of imminent doom. Those to whom the past is thus alive might take a little comfort from recollection. They might play with the notion that getting on the verge of imminent doom is a habit civilization has—bad but not fatal—and, like all habits, changeable. Remembering what abysses the human spirit has overleaped, which horrors it has overcome by enduring, and which by battling, they would not suffer so insuperable a despair with the present, nor project so infallible a faith upon the future. They would temper both their hopes and their fears with the knowledge that, since every man who is born must die, the events in his biography perforce follow a similar pattern.

So they would know that the alternations of good fortune and of bad, whose nature it has been the rôle of economic science to obscure, are no more than the natural weather of existence. They would recognize that the defenses against its irrelevancies have compounded themselves, since the beginnings of the industrial era, to a not inconsiderable accumulation. They would recognize, moreover, that the items of the accumulation have followed no predestined course, being not

repetitions of the past but variations from it, creatures of the tool-making imagination, of the creative intelligence of men. And, above all, the men with a sense of the living past would know that one of the most novel and most interesting items of this accumulation is the very widespread sympathy, the restless anxiety of so many of the more fortunate concerning the life, liberty, and happiness of the less fortunate. This frame of mind is one of the most signal components of the biography of industrial society.

2. SCHOOLMARMS TO THE BARRICADES!

I find, within the babel of plans and plots against the evils of our times, one only which doesn't merely repeat the past but varies from it. This is a proposal that the country's pedagogues shall undertake to establish themselves as the country's saviors. It appears in two pamphlets. The first is a challenge to teachers entitled *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* Its author is George Counts. The second is *A Call to the Teachers of the Nation*. The *Call* is sounded by the Committee of the Progressive Education Association on Social and Economic Problems. The chairman of the Committee and the prime author of the *Call* is again George Counts. The Committee's *Call* makes, as is natural, somewhat more tempered proposals than the individual's challenge. In essentials, however, they are but two statements of an identical doctrine. Where they are sound and moving, it is for identical reasons; where they are fallacious and misleading, it is on identical grounds. Basic objections to the one are also basic objections to the other. As Mr. Counts's personal challenge to teachers is prior and lays down the gradient for his Committee's *Call*, I shall discuss mostly the argument of the challenge. What holds of this will also hold of his *Call*.

With an imagination unparalleled among the saviors of civilization, with a faith stronger than every doubt and an earnestness overruling all irony, Mr. Counts suggests that the Great Revolution might be better accomplished and the Great Happiness more quickly established if the teachers rather than the proletarians seized power.

Society, he believes, is so badly off for leadership that "it might even accept the guidance of the teachers." They have a fitness:

> Representing as they do, not the interests of the moment or of any special class, but rather the common and abiding interests of the people, teachers are under heavy social obligations to protect and to further those interests. In this they occupy a relatively unique position in society. Also since the profession should embrace teachers and scientists and scholars of the highest rank, as well as teachers working at all levels of the educational system, it has at its disposal as no other group, the knowledge and wisdom of the ages. It is scarcely thinkable that these men and women should ever act as selfishly or bungle as badly as have the so-called "practical" men of our generation—the politicians, the financiers, the industrialists.

Having taken power, the teachers must use it to attain the "central purpose" of realizing the "American dream."[1] They must operate education as the instrument of social regeneration. This consists of inculcating right doctrine. The young of the nation must be rehearsed in "a tradition that has roots in American soil, is in harmony with the spirit of the age, recognizes the facts of industrialism, appeals to the most profound impulses of our people, and takes into account the emergence of a world-society"—a society without private property or special privilege, where men labor for service and not for profit; and where all things are held in common. Indoctrinate the citizens of the future in this "vision of a future America immeasurably more just and noble and beautiful than the America of today," and you lay the foundations of the new social order. Salvation is of the teachers, through indoctrination.

3. THE INVIDIOUS DOMINATION OF THE STATUS QUO

It is not easy for those who know what existing teachers (even the progressive ones) are like and how they work to regard this scheme of salvation as intended in any but a Pickwickian sense. It is even harder for those who are aware of

[1] The milder *Call* says: "Teachers cannot evade the responsibility of participating actively in the task of reconstituting the democratic tradition and of thus working positively toward a new society."

how indoctrination operates, historically and actually, to be lieve that a plan of salvation through indoctrination is meant to be anything but a Platonic fantasy or a Swift-like satire.

But if there is a Pickwickian, Platonic, or Swift-like intention in Mr. Counts's heart, he has not wound it in his tract. He recognizes the great difficulty which confronts the realization of his plan, and he insists that his proposalism can be practical provided there are enough teachers sufficiently brave and wise and strong and patient to make the heroic effort and to endure the bitter struggle it must require. He believes that enough such teachers are to be found, not so numerously in the public-school systems of the nation as amid the private and tangential educational endeavors known as progressive. If the progressive teachers have hearts bold enough to break the shackles of the pedagogic tradition which degrades and confines them, if they have the courage to reach out for power, the will to hold it, and the guts to stand the gaff which taking and using power requires, the schools can build a new social order. The teachers would need, of course, the cooperation of the fathers and mothers of their pupils, who could give it only in so far as they abandoned their bourgeois complacencies, saw themselves in the social context as they really are, and placed their disillusioned selves beside the embattled teachers to fight the class war.

The paramount event in their, in everybody's, conversion would be to abandon the fallacies upon which their illusions are nourished, concerning the relations of men's hearts and minds to doctrine, to discipline, to freedom. For their "freedom" is only the mushiness which comes from the lack of serious purpose in their hearts, so that their wills have no direction, their minds are confused, and they do not know where they are going though they are on their way. But if their wills have no direction, their lives have a very definite one, and not one which they have chosen but which has been imposed on them by the ruling passions, the prevailing fashions, of the times. The times discipline and indoctrinate the schools. The schools discipline and indoctrinate the young. None can escape. Indoctrination is universal and endemic, and the grown pupil of the most progressive of schools differs in no significant

way whatever from the grown pupil of the most conventional. All education is indoctrination and can be nothing else. The difference between one kind of education and another, therefore, cannot lie in its technique but in its subject matter. Right doctrine, not correct method, distinguishes good education from bad, progressive from reactionary. Indoctrinate in right doctrine and the world is saved.

Right doctrine, the true orthodoxy which the times need, Mr. Counts argues with a sincere and passionate eloquence, is "the American dream" brought up to date, revised into the collectivistic form which the industrial economy calls for.

Since, in this world of our action and passion, we are not free but bound. Did not Kant himself have to set the unseen as the locus of our freedom, saying that we choose *before* birth the kind of life we would live after and are bound till death by this choice? Our children, Mr. Counts would have us infer, are not born into a void, but into a culture with its folkways, mores, and valuations, its judgments of good and its judgments of evil, its classes and masses, its leaders and followers, its personages who are treated as ideals to attain and its anonymities who treat the personages as ideals to attain regardless of the purposes and practices of schools, whether progressive or reactionary. Our Fords and Lindberghs, our Morgans and Tunneys provide the makings of the mirage, of the *Forda Morgana*, which our Toms and Dicks and Harrys hope to embody in themselves. If the latter do not acquire their loyalties by a calculation of personal advantage, they acquire them through social contagion and emulative passion. Let, then, our educational ideals be what they will, the type dominant in the community, whether financier or racketeer, whether industrialist or prizefighter or movie actor, will, simply by being dominant, distort them in its own image.

Is it not, then, delusion to believe that diverse doctrines can have an equal status in the same social order, or that the same teacher, willy nilly the formal transmitter of the order, can teach impartially diverse and conflicting social doctrines? Only those without a stake in the difference can be impartial. Only those without an investment in the social order can judge it freely. And who may such free ones be? Certainly

not the progressive parent or the progressive teacher. The freedom which he believes himself to enjoy, like the beauty he does enjoy, depends upon the economic security which the established order guarantees and maintains for him. Let that be threatened as a free freedom might threaten it, and he will hardly fail to take sides against freedom.

What, then, is the freedom of which progressive education boasts? It is a negative and precarious thing, aware, not too clearly, of what it denies and rejects, but lacking all affirmative will and desire. Let its protagonists desire something positively, especially let them desire to keep their security secure, and pop! goes the freedom. They must perforce affirm passionately the system which secures their security. The more honestly aware they become of the foundations of their own lives and the character of their own aspirations, the more certainly they must align themselves with the defenders of the home capitalist order which is the seat and cause of all our woe.

If their desire to build a new social order is genuine, only one action is open for them. They must search out a doctrine which negates and nullifies the ruling orthodoxy and set up that negation as right doctrine. Counter-indoctrination is their salvation. To conservatism they must oppose radicalism; to individualism, collectivism; to competition, communism; to reaction, progress. There are no valid alternatives to these counter-doctrines. Current ones, those especially which describe education as teaching adjustment to a changing civilization, imply a gospel of drift as against mastery, of expediency as against principle, of unreliability as against integrity, and of anarchy as against order. "The control of the machine requires a society which is dominated less by the ideal of individual advancement and more by certain far-reaching purposes and plans for social construction." The days of capitalism are numbered. Its competitive life is its suicide. If teachers are to serve as saviors, they must indoctrinate us in a theory of a society which will not secrete the agencies of its own death in all its members, as well as in its heart.

I am afraid that this drab paraphrase does scanty justice to Mr. Counts's high argument. If it succeeds in giving only a hint of the humane ardor, the loving-kindness, the moral idealism, and the social insight which carry it, I shall be glad and proud. With its descriptions of the educational situation, within and without the progressive schools, I find myself in entire accord. I also have felt, and have taught during many years, that the greater part of what is accepted as educational science in the United States is much ado about nothing. And to me, certainly, that the illusions of the *Forda Morgana* are endemic is no news. I am happy to find confirmation by an authority so high of a view I have long held to be the true view.[2]

All the more must I regret that the inferences and interpretations which Mr. Counts draws from these evidences seem to me a complete *non sequitur;* a rationalization of his loving-kindness and passion for righteousness, not a reasonable conclusion from his analysis of the facts. Experience does not sustain his antitheses, whether actual or implied. They strike me as passional and verbal rather than analytical. His whole position impresses me as the verbalization of a strongly-held faith which makes its way by condemning rather than understanding that which is in opposition to it. Historically, such a mood, brave and challenging though its appearance be, rests upon a certain failure of nerve, a fear to stand naked before the ruling social dogma and to deal with it on its own terms, instead of by means of a contrary dogma contrariwise imposed. It is as if some wiser sheep of a flock crossing a bridge, noticing that many fall into the water on the right-hand side, forthwith scrams to the far left and plops himself into the very predicament he had thus meant to avoid.

True as it is that every living thing perforce believes in something with an absolute and animal faith, it is not true that the escape from evil consequences of indoctrination is to change your doctrine. The generations of men have been do-

[2] See my "Educational Ideals and Their Distortion by Society," in *The Child's Emotions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930); and *College Prolongs Infancy* (New York: John Day Co., 1931).

ing this all their lives, yet here is Mr. Counts among the other prophets of the land, prophesying that our latter end is worse than our beginning. Each new social doctrine in its time was offered to the people as the revelation of certainty, the guarantee of security, the gratification of desire; each in its time was denounced as the spring and engine of the oppressor, and overthrown for the sake of an upstart amazing anew the illusory certainties and securities of the old salvation. Inveterate as is the desire which generates these doctrines and comes to its false rest in them, no less inveterate is the disillusion of their overthrow. In the face of this overthrow, the insistence upon new doctrines for old is a wilful reaffirmation of a permanence which isn't there. This is the crass illusion concerning life.

Without the illusion, Mr. Counts suggests, our life would have no direction, would go nowhere but round and round in a circle. But that is a false antithesis. The true one is not between having a direction and moving in a circle, but between stepping a treadmill and changing one's place. The faithful, the indoctrinated, are men chained to a treadmill. A man on a treadmill indubitably has direction, but he isn't getting anywhere; he has direction, but he has nothing else. And has this been less the case with the faithful common Christian man or Hindu man of history than with the common workingman of our own times? Changing place may, indeed, be nothing more than going around in circles—but, after all, isn't that what the sun and the stars and the earth do, what the seasons do, and hasn't the spirit of man made the circle the symbol of perfection? Not that a straight line or a parabola might not be a pleasant change.

However, a truce to analogizing. A doctrine is a fixation. It defines a stopping place and sets a *terminus ad quem*. It imposes a standard with respect to which men, things, and events fall into preordained categories of good and evil. Whether the doctrine be the "American dream," the Christian scheme of salvation, the Fascist hierarchy, the Hitlerite sadistocracy, or the salvational drama of materialist dialectic—to mention only a few among the alternative candidates for a monopoly of orthodoxy—it can be final, indefeasible, infallibly

efficacious only to hearts at least as sentimental and heads at least as romantic as those that stake their country's salvation on progressive education. Faith in such indoctrinations is possible only at the price of a certain blindness to the actual dynamics of learning and to the living processes of education, in schools and out.

With the mood, with the aspiration, which animates this faith I have no quarrel. No matter what has stirred the former into life, it will, in the manner of moods and aspirations, make its natural progression through increase, fulness, diminution, and exhaustion. But the faith which it for the moment sustains, the theory of life, the philosophy and program of social change, has another standing. It enters the lists of time, experience, and reason and undergoes their challenge. They repudiate and reject it, and they repudiate and reject it precisely because its essence is an absolutism which only a deficiency in the sense of history, which is the soul of the sense of humor, permits.

Without this deficiency, the judgment upon the principles and practices of progressive education could hardly have been so challengingly bitter, so brilliantly intolerant. Without it there could not have been the easy assumption that the current conventions about the relations between the individual and society, between human values and economic motives, and between competition and solidarity are enduring truths. Without this deficiency, indoctrination could hardly have been canonized.

5. THE "FACTS" ONE WILLS TO BELIEVE IN

Let me elaborate the foregoing observation a little. For the moment I pass by the remarks on the ideals and implements of the educational progressives. They are conclusions to which the other remarks are premises, and I will deal with them in due course.

I turn first to "the underlying facts of life" which Mr. Counts insists we should defer to. And so we should, and do; but do we not choose which facts shall be underlying? There exists no general and widespread agreement as to which are so. Each sect, each party, each cult, selects for itself the facts

it ordains to be "underlying"; and even members of the same sect—"scientific" economists for example—do not attain a consensus. Nobody with a sense of the past would venture to assume that even unanimity—such as the thirteenth century is curiously presumed to be glorious for—is more than an equally conventional, or fashion, of thought and sentiment which alters with the generations.

The most received of the conventions of our own day evaluates the economic facts as the underlying ones. It expresses its judgments in statistical composites, it substitutes numbers, averages, and graphs for people, it takes *it* masses instead of men, of classes instead of individuals, and it deals with aggregates and totalities as if they were living organisms whose members are the social classes in which men and women live and move like cells. SOCIETY, written with capitals, looms, a homogeneous force independent and apart from the living individuals who compose it and who are actually its life, and the life of the works and thoughts left over, like almost-dead shells of snails and crabs, from past generations. This society is made subject of a theory of "social welfare" as if that could be quite another thing than the aggregate of distributive personal well-being. The conception of human good is made clavish and secondary. "There can be," affirms Mr. Counts, "no good individual apart from some conception of the character of the good society." And, unless I misread him evidently, this good society must be a collectivity, somehow distinct from and independent of the diverse individuals whose coming together in diverse ways compose it. And he chooses one doctrine regarding this collectivity—the socialist or communist—to champion. He rejects others, such as the fascist or nazi or capitalist.

Now to me, all these notions are the underlying *fictions* of modern life, not the underlying facts. The underlying facts are individuals, each inside his own skin, and never, with the best will in the world, able to get inside anybody else's skin. Whatever his faith or his professions, his attitudes or his practices, each individual to himself counts as one, and uniquely one, never by himself confused or mistaken for any other. He may rule the other or serve him, but he will not *be* him.

To realize this is to realize the fact which underlies all the other facts of life. Recall an epigram of William Watson's:

> Momentous to himself as I to me
> Hath each man been that woman ever bore;
> Once in a lightning flash of sympathy
> I *felt* this truth, an instant, and no more.

It is this felt truth, intellectualized, which inspired "the American dream," and its typical statement, in the Declaration of Independence, seems far more expressive of the underlying facts of life than the current conventions of theory and practice which are nullifying it. For the Declaration affirms the equality without sameness of all individuals; it acknowledges that each is a distinct and unique seat of values; it proclaims that there can be no good society apart from the character of the good individual. But the Declaration doesn't presume to prescribe what the good individual shall be.

For it recognizes that to himself and in himself each and every man is good, and only good. He is the ultimate consumer. It is when he is taken instrumentally that he may be bad as well as good. And he can be taken instrumentally only through his relations to other individuals, only socially, associatively. So taken, he becomes a citizen, a churchman, a teacher, a pupil, an athlete, a financier, or a worker, and lives under government, religion, and the other institutions which compose society. Each and every one of those derives its just powers from the consent of the individuals by and for and in whose lives it is maintained, and of whose lives it is an expression. None, as an association, is an end; all are tools. And their validation depends on what they accomplish as tools for the life, liberty, and happiness of the individuals who maintain them.

6. HOW CONFLICT AND COMPETITION ARE EXPLOITED FOR THE BENEFIT OF COMMUNIST AND OTHER TOTALITARIAN SYSTEMS

Each time a social establishment is challenged and its prevailing doctrine rejected for another, as by Mr. Counts and so many other thoughtful and devoted Americans, the theory that government depends on the consent of the governed is

made objective, the theory that justification depends on function, not form, is put to the experimental test, the primacy which in living experience cannot be alienated from the individual is invoked. To himself the individual is equal with others only in status and existence, not nature or function; he is not interchangeable with others, like a machine part or a money token. Consequently, his relations with others do not have to be inevitably *friendly* or inevitably competitive, but are now the one and now the other as time, place, and circumstances make desirable or necessary.

Conflict and competition are no more dispensable than harmony and cooperation in these associative contacts. Does not the all highest Stalin himself describe competition as "the Communist method of building socialism on the basis of maximum activity of millions of workers"? Does he not call it "the drive for the initiative of *the masses*," meaning the separate and distinct initiative of each member of "the masses"? And has not Lenin described socialism as creating the possibility of applying competition "on a really wide mass scale, of really drawing the vast majority of toilers into a sphere of such work in which they can develop their abilities, display their talents, which are still an untapped source in the nation and which capitalism trampled on, crushed and strangled by thousands and millions . . . ."[1] Sanctifying competition by the attribute "socialist" and the formula "mass scale" does not alter its nature. It only rationalizes a living relation between individuals and associations of individuals in exactly the same way as the adjective "Christian" rationalized the privileged position of "gentleman." The use of epithet in this manner accomplishes a sort of reconciliation between doctrines contrary to experience with the realities of experience. Dreams do the same thing. Nobody who is aware of the tragi-comedies of industrial management in Russia will have delusions about the realities of the competitive life there. The communist doctrine may make the intensities of this life more endurable, but it works precisely as Marx said religions work, as the opiate of the people.

[1] See especially the case records in *Socialist Competition of the Masses*, by E. Mirochina, with a Preface by J. Stalin (Moscow: Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in U.S.S.R., 1932).

Indeed, present-day Russia provides a communist, as historic Europe provided a Christian, demonstration of the ironies inherent in purposive indoctrination. The contrasts between Christian professions and Christian practices have been commonplaces among all the pious scolds of Christian history.[4] But there has not yet been time for the sense of humor to take note of the romantic idealism whose *élan* drives indoctrinated dialectical materialists into compelling the Russian masses to deprive themselves today of food, clothing, shelter, and the satisfaction of other material needs, for the sake of an immaterial vision of an ambiguous future according to hopes five years away, and according to possibilities, fifty. It is still too soon for the ironist to incorporate into the tradi-

[4] Recent Soviet legislation regarding the teaching of history reported by the Moscow *Pravda* of May 16, 1934, repeats the modifications Sunday schools have found it necessary to make in Christian teaching. The "Marxist understanding of history," no less than the Christian, has to be adjusted to the limitations of the human mind. Says the *Pravda:*

"The Council of People's Commissaries of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and the Central Committee of the Communist Party note that the teaching of history in the schools of the Soviet Union is being handled unsatisfactorily. Both the textbooks and the instruction have an abstract, schematic character. Instead of the teaching of history in a lively, interesting form, by presenting the most important events and facts in their chronological sequence, with characterizations of historical leaders—the students are offered abstract definitions of social-economic formulations, thus replacing a connected account of history by abstract sociological schemas.

"The absolute condition for the effective acquisition by students of a knowledge of history, is the observing of the historical-chronological sequence in the presentation of historical events, with the definite fixing in the memories of the students of important historical facts, historical figures and dates. Only such a presentation can guarantee access to, and a clear and concrete sense of, historical material. Such an access alone makes possible proper understanding and correct generalization of historical events, leading the student to a Marxist understanding of history.

"Therefore, the Council of People's Commissaries and the Central Committee of the Communist Party decree:

(1) To prepare, by June, 1935, the following new textbooks on history:
   a) History of the Ancient World
   b) History of the Middle Ages
   c) Modern History
   d) History of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
(2) To appoint the following committees to prepare the new textbooks:
   a) . . . . . .
(3) In order to prepare properly qualified specialists in history, to re-establish, from September 1, 1934, the Faculties of History in the Moscow and Leningrad Universities, with a yearly contingent of 150 students each, the period of instruction being set at five years."

(*Signed by Molotov and Stalin*)

[Translated by Samuel N. Harper, June 2, 1934]

tion of classic laughter the hot effort of devout economic determinists to nullify the working of the sacred laws of economic determination upon the unruly and obstinate individuals who transgress their cherished canons, by requiring them to make very present economic sacrifice that the communist state may make future economic gains. Non-economic, indeed anti-economic, determination in the individual is called upon to validate economic determinism in the Soviet. And, even so, the true believers are not free from heretical contamination. Periodically the Communist Party must undergo purgation at the hands of its leaders. An infallible church jealous for its dogmas or a capitalist state at war would require nothing more of its subjects.

With nazi Germany and fascist Italy the irony is even more complete.

7. ON THE COMPENSATORY AGE OF DOCTRINES

Capitalist, or communist, or what you will, imposed doctrines which stigmatize their alternatives and competitors as heresies to repress instead of theories to test generate the twistings, the turnings, the paradoxes, hypocrisies, and evasions of conduct that history keeps familiar. And this is enough to indicate whence spins the very fabric of the illusion concerning indoctrination.

Was it really needful to labor the point, even to progressives in education, that indoctrination is universal and endemic? Was it not largely their sensitiveness to this obvious historic condition which made progressives of them? The protagonists of progressive education had the record in mind. They noted how, in each land, in each age, certain doctrines, rationalizing certain passions, insuring and certifying the security of certain types of vested interest, were imposed by *force majeure* and maintained and transmitted by education. They noted how contrary passions and opposed interests projected and perfected their own doctrines; how they struggled not merely to survive but to rule. They noted that for the most part these competitors were exterminated, but that those which survived without victory established themselves as going concerns within the environment of their alterna-

tives and rivals. The relations between them were first a sort of armed watchfulness, which is the initial moment of toleration. Then they became that mixture of conflict and co-operation which the politicians know as balance of power. Later the relationships became a sort of mutuality, a federative co-operation, expressible in the formula "Live and let live," even "Live and help live."

The doctrines of the Christian sects provide an eminent instance of this progression. Beginning as a loose syncretic union of the cult-ideas of antiquity with aspects of the Judaistic myth, Christian doctrine was standardized, declared infallible, unique, and holy, and imposed upon the masses and classes of Europe by force, by fraud, by considerations of advantage, and most particularly by control of the schools. Nevertheless, the unity and universality of this doctrine were never complete and always precarious. It lost most of its force when it was deprived of material coercive power. Today, Christian doctrine is diversified, plural, regional, and optative, and in the United States its sectaries live in a loosely co-operative confederation. Regarding the intent and meaning of its fundamental vehicle, the Gospels, there exists a widespread consensus. Hardly a European child grows up without having been indoctrinated therein; hardly any American Christian will fail to affirm the congruity of the Gospels' social dicta with "the American dream." Yet, save sporadically, the doctrines of the Gospels never went over into ways of life. They prevail as ways of talking.

And does not the same thing hold also of the "American dream"? What does the "great American school system" accomplish more than the thorough and systematic indoctrination of all the country's children in this right doctrine concerning the nation? Has not America, whose other name is opportunity, where every man is as good as his betters, and every boy may be president or even bank president, been set in the place of both God the Father and God the Son? And has not the school taken away the functions of the church? Have not the schoolma'ams been required to take on the walks and ways of the dominies? Observers like H. G. Wells

long ago admired and glorified the utter potency of indoctrination in the "American dream" which American schools accomplish. In sad truth, then, if there were any salvation in indoctrination, Mr. Counts's eloquent and moving plea for a heresy to combat and to transform the national orthodoxy should have been superfluous.

That the plea is so far from superfluous bears witness how illusory must be any hope of help from indoctrination. The doctrines which compose the "American dream" serve, like those which compose the Christian or the communist dream, as compensations in idea for the hardships, the pang, and the misery of events in experience. These doctrines do not describe, they contradict the facts. And they contradict the facts because they are habits of talking, not habits of living. Living is always in the present. It consists in the present and enduring consciousness we have of our total reaction to the world in which we move and have our being. Living is "the fact" in their fullness, all the events which we enact and suffer as we enact and suffer them, moment to moment and year to year. Talking, on the other hand, in so far as it involves meanings, looks away from the present, to the past, and to the future.

Compensatory with respect to the present, the ways of talking we call doctrines are presumed to work as imaginative realizations of the past and as programs for the perceptual actualizations of the future. But their dynamic bearings, whether as imaginative realizations or perceptual actualizations, can never be anything but present. Thus, the present function of any doctrine is essentially religious: to console us for present trouble with past glories and future hopes. Review the recessional of doctrines imposed upon the generations, and by the generations thrown off, and you will see only too clearly with what ease and smoothness indoctrination, obscuring and distorting techniques of life by habits of talk, falsifies the actual and defeats life's ends. Beside the actualities of present experience, doctrines show themselves too much like imaginative lies about the past and false hopes about the future.

I will not say that all the protagonists of progressive education had in mind considerations such as the foregoing. I know that some did, notably, of course, John Dewey. Doctrines, those men and women felt, have, as such, been the material of education long enough; it is time to try another material. Suppose that you do adopt another language for the "American dream," that of Marx or that of Mussolini or that of Hitler, what then? You simply go on repeating the past in the present; you bring in no new and truly alterative efficacy. To do this you require vital energy, implemented and directed; and doctrines are verbal habits, not implemented energies. Doctrines divert energy; they do not employ it. The evils which indoctrination produces are not to be evaded by a turn from one doctrine to its opposite. That is too much like insuring peace by means of competitive armament. Perhaps the protagonists of progressive education were also deluded. Certainly all the softness of their characters and disciplines, all the errors of their works and ways, are clear enough. Certainly they are not to be condoned. But neither is their courage to break with the past to be deprecated, nor is their brave and thankless endeavor to seek in education a new way to be minimized. At least they did not stake their educational all upon a delusory foregone conclusion. At least they did not seek merely to inculcate doctrine, and they did seek to develop and strengthen intelligence.

There are certain commonplaces concerning intelligence which we must not weary of repeating. They have a very significant bearing on indoctrination. Intelligence is possible only in a world which is plural, diversified, competitive, and changing. It is an activity which fuses the recognition of these traits with discernment of the variety and direction of their dynamic trends, and with a choosing from among the alternatives these present. To intelligence, the grammar of assent is repugnant.[5] Intelligence is born in doubt, it grows by inquiry,

[5] It is somewhat disillusioning to find the *Call* urging teachers also to insist upon *academic freedom* (p. 24). The position is too near the Augustinian: *I am right and you are wrong. When you are in power it is your duty to tolerate me because I am right. When I am in power it is my duty to persecute you because you are wrong.*

discrimination, selection, and testing. To intelligence a doctrine is not a "truth" to rest in but a theory to work with, a tool justified not by what it is made of, or by how it looks, or by how it sounds, but by what it accomplishes. To prize doctrine on any other grounds is to practice by proxies of the instrument, to turn the tool into an idol, as churches and states and schools persist in doing. Indeed, to prize it on any other grounds is to abort actuality, it is to make the end into a means, the means into an end. It is to confirm that man is made for the Sabbath or for the church, for the state, for whatever institution. It is to affirm the conventional lie that individuals exist for "society," not for themselves and each other.

I say conventional lie. Because the actualities of human life are first and last human individuals. Whether in their diversity and multitude as they should be, or in some always precariously privileged few, individuals are the seats of value, the immanent ends for whose sake the institutions and establishments of society are set up, altered, or pulled down. To himself, each man is, as he lives his life from birth to death, with all the expansions and contractions, withdrawals and generations that living a life involves, his own end, he can have no other because he can be no other; and the manifold world around him of thoughts and things and people takes meaning and value by their diverse bearings on his personality.[1] This personality is set, willy-nilly, by the changing struc-

[1] As one of the pioneers of progressive education summed up his experience of society a property of a student (Caroline Pratt, "As to Incorrigibles," Progressive Education, February-March, 1940): "In analyzing what they wanted for their children, early progressive students found that the most for a professional group seemed very much closer to those of the primitive. That is, in both cases the effort was to make the child a member of a group contributing to the adjustment of the individual. The conventional way to do this was to make the child fit into a set mold in his own way . . . In the progressive school that the psychologist of the individual child is the main thing which stands in the way of his getting what he needs in growing his own small life—either his psychologist or the child himself, sometimes. Most of the individuals need to develop their own ends. Individual learning is stifled by individual frustrations. These individuals grow up to conformism because of their inexperience. A child whose major purpose is to succeed at the traditional and to succeed well is a personality are conditioned or frustrated persons. He may be outstanding from the standpoint daily by being fed to see the great possibilities of society the materials. To be concerning to note that what is regarded as a 'vice' in a child is a 'virtue' in the business world of today. Children have to learn how to get along with each other, how to attain their own ends, and finally because there is a reward in having friendly relations with one's peers, or, on the other hand, in fighting

ture of nature and the conduct of men outside of and over against its world—his own self, distinguished from all others. Merely to exist consists in constant choosing from the multitudinous alternatives which compose the world, as even Mr. Counts chooses indoctrination in communism and rejects fascism, nazism, and freedom. This continuous choosing, its ways, directions, patterns, comprises the dynamic essence of each individual's personality. According to its range, scope, intensity, and variations, he is of great intelligence or small, rich in human quality or poor.

Obviously, any individual's failure or success, the stunting of his life or its growth into diversified abundance, must depend far more on his methods of choosing than on the materials he chooses from. Doctrines, though sometimes methods of choice, are first and last materials chosen from. If indoctrination is inescapable—and it is, since a man must believe in something if he is to be a man at all—it had best be an indoctrination in the relativity and contingency of all doctrines, in their dependence on choice and experience, and in the process and pattern of choosing which we call intelligence.[7] Because of the very nature of choice and intelligence, indoctrination in doctrines must be more than the setting up of a habit of talking; it cannot be accomplished save through the devel-

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what is disapproved. Freedom has come to have a new meaning. It begins to mean freedom from themselves as well as from the domination of others. . . . .

"The schemes for the remaking of society are studied. . . . . This is enough for children to know. After all, the problem is not theirs. They can do nothing but talk, and this is time thrown away. Besides, by the experimental method, the work at each stage of development is finished when the children have acquired the power to think. No one should tell them what to think. Having constantly been brought up against situations for their solution, and having solved their own problems, it is fair to assume that they will continue to do this when the problem is theirs to solve.

"The danger of taking any other attitude is very great. I am not unfamiliar with young, very young communists. Often these boys and girls are thwarted children who have not made their way with their peers, and they are as badly placed in adult operations as they have found themselves to be in childish and youthful ones. Their frustrations only will become greater under conditions with which they are still less able to cope. It also seems that adult society would yield to the experimental method. . . . . "

[7] The problem is not a problem of faith, primarily, but a problem of doubt. People believe readily enough and can be taught anything by anybody who knows the technique. What is difficult to teach them is to doubt. Doubt is the beginning of intelligence, and therefore of salvation.

opment of habits of doing. In the sciences we have the best exemplars how competence comes to men who are committed to no dogmas about things, and whose only dogmas concern the procedures by whose means dogmas may be tested. Indoctrination in the method of the sciences, their extension as a way of life and not a way of talking, could still be called indoctrination, but it would be an indoctrination that might truly save. For it would be indoctrination in a way by which the validity of doctrines could be tested.

The very argument that Mr. Counts uses to justify indoctrination as an alternative to the methods now prevailing in the progressive schools assumes what it denies. For he could not argue at all unless he believed that progressive educators are not so indoctrinated in progressivism as to be unable to compare, to discriminate, and to choose between what they have and what he offers.

And was it not this very ability which initiated and now maintains the progressive movement in education? What started the movement if not the recognition that indoctrination has been futile to make men righteous, and strong only to make them self-righteous? If the progressives' current alternatives to indoctrination are deficient in technique, is that beyond correction? I do not think so. I see them as consequences of the fact that those responsible for the theory and practice of progressive education were deeply sensible of that which they were seeking. The freedom they established, hence, has been by and large a negative freedom, and it does not, as I have shown elsewhere, succeed in immunizing its young against contagion from the prevailing mores.[8] It is true that young people from progressive schools make the impression of passing swiftly out of pedagogic anarchy into social conformity. But I do not see that this need continue. Indeed, even if the champions and protagonists of progressive education want it to, it cannot. The progressive system will be compelled to move either into the indoctrination of the "American dream" transformed by Marxism or fascism or into indoctrination of the religion of freedom as the sciences practice free-

[8] H. M. Kallen, "Educational Ideals and Their Distortion by Society," in *The Child's Emotions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).

dom. The latter alone could develop into the practice of the life of reason. Its dominant emotion would be courage, the courage to face alternatives, without prejudice to discriminate their natures, to imagine their possible consequences, and then to choose between them and to risk the future on the choice.

Indoctrination so directed has its roots in the original nature of man. Unlike indoctrination in doctrines, it is capable of growing thence into an art of life which does not violate but fulfils the human spirit.

SUGGESTED READING

George S. Counts, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* (John Day).

A Call to the Teachers of the Nation, by the Committee of the Progressive Education Association on Social and Economic Problems.

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A Charter for the Social Sciences in the Schools. Drafted by Charles A. Beard. Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, Part I (Scribners).

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